

FLY LINES



DECEMBER 2017

The December Christmas Dinner - with Travis Dowling

The guest speaker for our Christmas Dinner this year will be Travis Dowling, Chief Executive Officer of the Victorian Fisheries Authority.

Travis is an accomplished executive with over 15 years' experience in senior leadership and management roles across natural resources and politics in Victoria and the Northern Territory.

His previous appointments included Deputy Chief of Staff to the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory. On his return to Victoria in 2005 he was Chief of Staff to the Minister for the Environment, Water and Climate Change, Victoria. Then in the years 2007 to 2015 he has held positions as



Thursday, December 14,
6:30 for 7:00 pm start,
at the Kelvin Club
(in Melbourne Place,
off Russell Street)

Manager of Freshwater Fisheries, Director of Fisheries Management and Science, Executive Director of Fisheries, and now Chief Executive Officer of the Victorian Fisheries Authority.

As CEO of the Victorian Fisheries Authority, he is supported by a highly experienced and cohesive executive team specialising in regulation and enforcement, policy, science and fisheries management. But foremost, as a passionate fisher and devoted Dad to three beautiful kids, he loves nothing better than being outdoors. His passion for fishing is only matched by his love of the Collingwood Football team.

Travis is a very entertaining, engaging and informed speaker, and his presentation at our Christmas Dinner will undoubtedly give us a fascinating insight into the health and progress of our Victorian trout fishery. So please join us at the Kelvin Club on Thursday, December 14.

(A dinner invitation is again included with this issue of *Fly Lines*.)

THE VICTORIAN FLY-FISHERS' ASSOCIATION INC.

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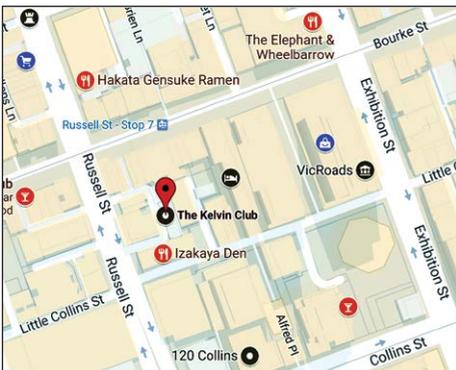
Hamish Hughes

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Reminder - Getting to the Kelvin Club:



The Kelvin Club is located at 14 – 30 Melbourne Place. Melbourne Place runs off the east side of Russell Street between Little Collins Street and Bourke Street in the CBD.

President's Message

Well, what a month it's been. So much has happened in the fly fishing world and the VFFA in particular that it's hard to know what to include and where to start. So let's just dive in and see what happens.

Our hard-working and conscientious Editor, Lyndon Webb, was overcome with concern and apology at not bringing out the November issue of *Fly Lines* on time. But what a lot of people didn't know was that he was somewhat indisposed, having had surgery and then having to spend time recovering. Doing nothing, in fact, and that is something that doesn't sit well with Lyndon. The good news, though, is that the surgery went well and he is making a good recovery, so much so that my email account lit up the other day with reminders that I needed to get my monthly message to him as he was deep in production of the final issue for the year. Good to see you're getting back to your old self, Mr Editor, Sir!

There were plenty of VFFA members at the Talk Wild Trout conference at Mansfield last month. And they were presented with a raft of information on trout fishing-related topics such as river conditions, fish movements and feeding patterns, discussion on stocking and in-stream incubator trials. Our own Dermot O'Brien was one of the presenters, succinctly reporting on the successful tree planting project on the banks of the Little River a few weeks ago.

Again, I was encouraged to see the amount of information being generated by the research being undertaken by the Victorian Fisheries Authority (VFA), which should help lay the ground-work for initiatives to improve trout fishing



in Victorian streams and ensure our sport for future generations. I had the opportunity to chat with Travis Dowling, CEO of the VFA, who will be our guest speaker at this year's Christmas Dinner. He's looking forward to the event and I'm sure he will have a fascinating and informative tale to tell, so make sure you get your reservation in promptly.

I have managed, finally, to avoid falling foul of the various viruses and bugs doing the rounds and spent some wonderful time actually fishing. First of all on the Howqua River, thanks to the generosity of Wes Betts, and then on the Big River, courtesy of John Pilkington. Both rivers were in great condition, there were plenty of fish about, and I managed to get among a few of them. One memorable morning was spent exploring the undercut banks and overhanging snags on the Taponga, which resulted in

some very interesting, though difficult, fishing, with several exciting results.

Had I tackled the tricky Taponga a week or so later my success rate might have been significantly higher after participating in the streamcraft session on the King Parrot Creek, led by David "Choco" Grisold. Eleven members took part in the session and all took away valuable information imparted by Choco from his years of experience and knowledge of fishing small streams.

I was particularly pleased to be there as I was a very keen advocate in encouraging the VFFA to include streamcraft tuition in its program. I'd like to think that similar sessions will become a permanent fixture on our calendar. Thanks David for your enthusiasm in holding the day and also to Rhonda for her support in making the event so successful.

After a welcome BBQ lunch and something to wash it down, most of the group ended up exploring the dams on Tranquil Rises, several managing to snag a fish, including at least one Golden Trout.

One event I couldn't get to was the annual trip to Warrnambool. A group of 10 of our members made the journey out west and as usual were generously hosted by our Warrnambool friends. I have been reliably informed that their hospitality was fabulous, even if the fishing was not quite so successful. I'm sorry I was not able to take part; maybe next year.

I did however attend our November general meeting and thoroughly enjoyed the presentation by Jim Blakeslee, Fly Lines correspondent from Warrnambool, and one of the magnanimous hosts of our Warrnambool trip. Jim entertained a good

group of members with a beautifully illustrated account of a recent fishing and hiking adventure in the High Sierras of California. Quite spectacular, and thanks Jim for sharing the experience.

And sharing is the theme of my final topic this month, as I was honoured to be invited to officiate at the official launch of Andrew Mossman's book "My Fly-fishing Life". What a fine production it is and a wonderful account of Andrew's life-long pursuit of trout here and overseas. He shares his experiences with us, his triumphs and his disappointments, his constant search for new and challenging fly fishing and his never-ending experimentation with flies to fool the wily trout. The event itself was fun and very entertaining; a true Mossman production.

Well, that's it from me this month, this year, in fact. I'd like to take this opportunity to wish you and your families a very merry Christmas and a happy and safe New Year.

Here's to 2018 and as usual, Tight Lines.

Mike



The February Meeting with David Anderson

Our February meeting, the first meeting in the new year, will again be a lunchtime meeting, commencing at 12 noon at the Kelvin Club. The date is Thursday, February 22.

Our speaker for this meeting will be David Anderson, who contributes regularly to *FlyLife* magazine.

David was born in Sydney, but grew up in America after his father, a geologist, moved the family to Illinois where he taught at the University of Illinois.

David's first serious fly fishing experiences were on one of his dad's summer field trips to Wyoming. David was 11 or 12 when one of the professors loaned him a rod and reel and showed him the basics of trout fishing with a fly on the Wind River. It's since been a serious addiction and never far from the front of his mind for over forty years.

His interest in photography began during a trip to Egypt in the early eighties, when his mother, a Middle Eastern news correspondent, loaned him a Nikon, a couple of rolls of monochrome film, and just enough instruction to make it a lifelong pursuit.

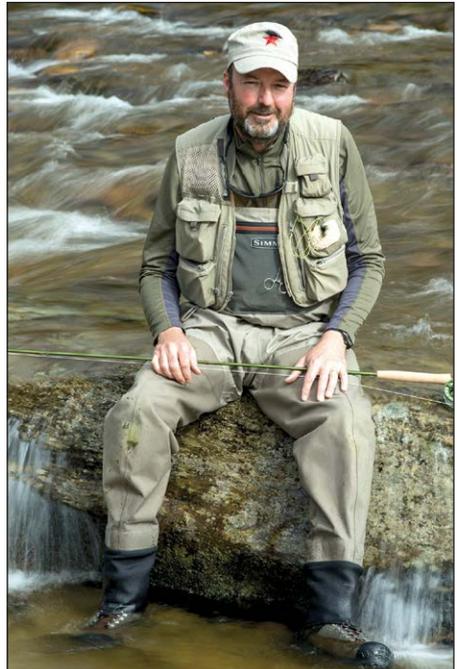
David returned to Australia in 1984, fly rod in hand, for a six-week holiday. He found people of like mind, some very interesting long-lost relatives, and excellent trout fishing not far from Sydney on the Turon River. Somehow he never returned to the United States.

After a few years working in Sydney music stores as a guitar salesman by day, and part-time rock and roll photographer by night, David started full-time photography in 1989 and was soon working for several record companies,

music magazines, and local bands like The Screaming Jets, Silverchair and several others.

By 1995 David's career had expanded to include work for most mainstream Australian magazines and many others from around the world. He was soon working all over and shooting anyone willing to stand still, including on the Queen Elizabeth II, The Rolling Stones, Pink, U2 and John Farnham, as well as a large collection of local movie and TV stars and many of Hollywood's finest. His work can be viewed at www.dsaphoto.com.

Fly fishing photography was, of course, always there, but with the launch of *Flylife* magazine in 1995 there were



A very relaxed David Anderson

new opportunities to shoot locally in Tasmania, and in New Zealand.

With encouragement from editor Rob Sloane and a lot of help from good mate and fellow photographer/writer Peter Morse, David wrote his first article 'Cryptic Creeks' on small streams of the Snowy Mountains in 2005 and many more have followed since.

Nowadays David lives a quieter life in Albury, NSW, very close to the trout-infested 4x4 paradise that is the Victorian high country, with his wife and three children, and writes and photographs

for *Flylife* magazine and his own small-stream fly fishing blog www.twigwater.com

At our February meeting David will talk about fly fishing and photography, including some tips on how we might improve our own photography. His presentation will consist mainly of fly fishing photos, and be assured - we are in for a display of absolutely stunning images.

David will have copies of his new book – *Fly Fishing – Places to catch trout in Australia and New Zealand* – for sale, and members wanting to purchase a signed copy will be able to do so.

November Meeting - with Jim Blakeslee

Jim had recently completed a trek through the High Sierras in California. In his presentation he spoke mainly about this experience, though also referring briefly to the fishing in the rivers around Warrnambool in Western Victoria. Jim's talk was based on a magnificent collection of photos taken during his trek. The following is a very brief summary of his talk.

I'll talk to the photos on the screen, which show the beginning of a walk I did with my wife Trish and a friend, Peter Conrick, who was originally from Geelong but who now lives in a suburb

of Seattle. He's been there for a number of years, and has done a lot of hiking in Oregon and Washington State, but never the High Sierras in California.

So he was looking forward to this particular trip. He is a real fitness fanatic, but you'll notice that he has a bandage on one knee, so was carrying an injury. He was concerned that he wouldn't be able to do this walk, but luckily had a month of rehabilitation time before we began the trek. One of the things he was concerned about was reducing the amount of weight in his pack since he had this injured knee, so he was obsessed with carrying a really lightweight pack.

The little fish that I showed you earlier are known as golden trout. They are a subspecies of the same rainbows that were introduced here in Australia >>>



The team - loaded up and heading off

from the Russian River in California, and actually come from a tributary of the Kern River in the Sierra Nevada mountains.

Here's a map of California and all along the east side of the state there is a mountain range called the Sierra Nevada. On the east side of the Sierra Nevada range there is a town called Bishop, which is the starting point for people who want to head off into the high country. Lots of tourist shops there, and outfitters and so forth where you can buy your fishing tackle and hiking gear. Our packs were loaded up with a fair bit of stuff because we were about to walk for nine days.



Jim and Trish - their trek being well-signposted

South of that area is the highest point in continental United States called Mount Whitney, at about 14,500 feet, and in the gradient going south from Mount Whitney is the Kern River. It runs south into the San Joaquin River, which then drains north into San Francisco Bay. The other big river from California that runs down the central valley from the north is the Sacramento.

Those two big rivers historically had huge runs of salmon, and one of the Pacific salmon was a species that people called 'rainbow trout', and DNA profiling confirms that the rainbow trout we are familiar with here in Australia are in fact a Pacific salmon. So those little golden trout you saw earlier are also a variety of Pacific salmon. The reason they are so different from rainbows is that they were separated by a big waterfall that stopped them from going downstream or any rainbows coming upstream to interbreed.

They developed their own particular habits and appearance, and adapted to cold water and high altitudes. They can survive for long periods of time under ice either in streams or in lakes with not very much to eat. We were fishing for them at altitudes from 8,000 feet to 11,000 feet in high lakes and streams.

Compare these to the fish I am going to talk about later on – the brown trout which you know so well and fish for here in Australia and New Zealand. Brown trout, as you know, were introduced into Australia from England, where they came from the Itchen and Test rivers. They were then bred at, among other places, the hatchery in Ballarat, and in 1875 some 200 fry from Ballarat were stocked in the rivers around Warrnambool. Unfortunately they never really acclimatised well. Not there anyway.



Jim with a typical upper Merri brown

Further to the east in the Otway Ranges they settled in well, but unfortunately down in the Warrnambool area we have had to rely primarily on stocking for a long time to maintain our brown trout fishery. We tried the Vibert Boxes method, but Fisheries doesn't much like it, and prefer to keep stocking. So as long as they are prepared to pick up the bill for the cost, we are happy.

In the US, aside from introducing brown trout from England, some brown trout were also introduced from Loch Levin in Scotland, and others from Germany. So people in the US talk about catching 'German browns' and Loch Levins.

My first experience with fly fishing started in 1968. I had fished with bait and lures when I was young, but found myself looking for something that was a little bit different to go on with when fishing and hiking at high altitudes. I felt I might improve my fishing by trying to cast a fly at these little fish instead of just tossing a frog (which we used to use in

those days), or grasshoppers, and that sort of thing.

So I took up fly fishing in 1968. In those days the sort of flies we would use were what we bought at the outfitters at Bishop, which they called 'mosquito flies', and which were basically a Quill Gordon. We also used patterns to represent grasshoppers, such as a Joe's Hopper or a Muddler Minnow, especially if you were fishing in autumn when the hopper patterns were particularly effective. And that's pretty much all we used on this year's trip.

Compare that with what happened when I moved to Australia in 1976. Lyndon Webb was the head of the science faculty when I started teaching biology at Warrnambool High School, and it wasn't too long before he talked me into joining the VFFA sub-branch at Warrnambool, the Warrnambool Fly Fishing Club.

I went to my first Warrnambool Fly Fishers' annual dinner, where we sat and



Jim casting into one of those high country streams

>>>



Trish and Peter on the trail

ate fish and game, and I was introduced to people like Arthur Hogan and saw the types of flies that were used down there. Instead of fishing small flies like those mosquito flies to catch tiny trout at high altitudes, I was down at sea level tossing things like Green Matukas and White Matukas – flies that were quite large to represent the local galaxia minnows and smelt. Later on I developed a pattern called a Sandy that represented a gudgeon, and I recall seeing big browns that were chasing minnows and crashing into schools of minnows on the surface of the Merri River.

When I went with Lyndon to fish the Moyne River near Port Fairy I found that the browns there weren't doing much minnow chasing, but seemed to be mooching around the weed beds. I

thought they might be eating shrimp, so I pulled out a pattern that is called the Cream Bug and gradually altered the colours until the pattern represented the shrimp down that way. This fly is called the Green Bug in *Time Flies*, the recent VFFA book, and it's still the main fly that I use at Warrnambool to catch browns.

That first year I was down there I was gradually working things out, and by 1977 I was into my first really big fish on the Moyne. It weighed 7½ lb, and was caught on the morning of the Warrnambool Fly Fishers' Annual Dinner, so I took it along to the dinner. Some VFFA members from Melbourne had come down for the dinner, and Arthur Hogan picked up my fish and carried it around, flopping it down at all the tables, gloating and suggesting that "this is what

you guys could catch if you lived down here.” It was actually very embarrassing, but that was Arty.

We have some good lakes down there, and I discovered that Australians have a fixation with a nymph called a mudeye, which of course is a dragonfly nymph. The Canadians worked out a long time ago that big fish like to eat mudeyes, so I started using a Canadian mudeye pattern called the Carey Special. I also found that the good old Mrs Simpson was also an effective mudeye pattern. I later altered the Mrs Simpson colours by using the feathers from some Tassie hens. They have these greenish brown feathers which make a really good mudeye pattern.

Getting back to our walk through the High Sierras, my friend Peter Conrick, my wife Trish and I started at about 9,500 feet hiking up from the trailhead to a place called South Lake near Bishop. We were heading for Bishop pass. The trail system that you see up there is really

excellent and is the product of a program called the Civilian Conservation Corps, which gave work to returned servicemen who had some explosives experience. They built the trail system that the US now has, nominally in California but throughout the country. In areas where the mountains were impassable the men with explosives experience blasted out satisfactory trails.

We were hiking late in the season and were nearing Bishop pass at about 12,000 feet with Trish and Pete huffing and puffing towards the summit. We finally made it. Then we started down the other side. When you are up there you get fried by the ultraviolet, so sunscreen and a good pair of sunglasses come in handy. Even though we were hiking in late summer and it was about 90°F down at Bishop, at night where we were it was below freezing. So a good sleeping bag and tent were requirements, along with some warm gear. Each morning we would get up and get dressed and >>>



High country accommodation

head off, and when we came across a lake with some nice weed beds we would see some fish cruising and have a cast. Hopefully we would catch something to eat. Peter was obsessed about his pack being lightweight didn't take enough food for the nine days, so he was relying on catching trout to supplement his food supply.



The hut built to honour John Muir

We eventually arrived at a lake called Helen Lake, which was a cobalt blue colour. Right at the top of the pass there was a hut built to honour John Muir. It was built in the early 1930s and is quite spartan inside. You wouldn't want to stay there unless you were quite desperate. But the architecture was classic – built like a cone. I don't know why they put a fireplace in it, as there is no wood there to burn.

From there we moved on to stay at a lake called Wanda. That night Peter almost froze to death. To save weight he had taken an ultralight sleeping bag, which wasn't anywhere near warm enough. So during the night we got this desperate call and he moved into join us in our little two-man tent. After that he used his plastic bag as a groundsheet and accepted

the use of my down jacket at night to sleep in his sleeping bag.

We walked downhill to this lake called Sapphire Lake in some very pretty country. We were able to catch golden trout here and kept a few for dinner. They are easy to catch – on almost every cast you had one on. They are such beautiful fish they were hard to resist, but we would catch just one or two that we would keep and eat.

Another thing that Peter was obsessed about in terms of weight was the amount of fuel that he carried. We were using fuel bottles to cook with, and Trish and I took between us 2 litres of fuel each for the nine days, but Pete only took 750 mL of fuel, which wasn't enough, so in the end we actually lit a couple of campfires when we weren't supposed to.

We encountered lots of wildlife on our walk, including marmots and some snowshoe hares. There were also bears up there, and one of the things the officials insist you take with you are these bear barrels that you have pack inside your pack and somehow jam all the rest of the gear in too. We took a rope and anything that was aromatic or edible we would hoist up into a tree, so our packs were out of the range of bears.



Some of those magnificent golden trout

We walked up our third pass towards Hutchinson Meadow and found beautiful water again. And again we caught more of those little golden trout, typically about 10 inches long. In terms of their feeding patterns in a lake they will come up like a brownie and inspect your fly very carefully, then sip it down. In a stream it's another story because there they don't have quite as much time to think about it.

Next morning saw us climbing up again to the top and then down again to a chain of lakes taking us back towards Bishop and our car. From there we shuttled back to Southlake to a motel to get cleaned up and eat a nice steak.

We had enjoyed glorious sunny weather during our walk, but as we finished the clouds came in and it snowed all night and all the next day. As we drove back

to my mother's place on the other side of the Sierra Nevada range it was still snowing. I'll leave it at that point and answer any questions.



Jim with another beautiful golden trout!



This Month's Yarn ...

(... from June 1956)

"You know, it has always intrigued me," said Alf, "how fly fishing is such an all-consuming and obsessive pastime for its practitioners, and that fly fishing practices and paraphernalia seem to infiltrate all aspects of their lives".

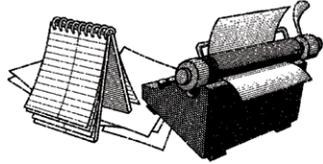
"This is true," said McTaggart, looking around tentatively to see who might fund his second glass of lunch. "It brings to mind an incident I recall happening in Tasmania some years ago. The local doctor up in the highland lakes area was taking some long service leave, and had organised for a young medico from Victoria to act as his locum. Now this young medico was badly bitten. He was a fanatical fly fisherman, and was shaking with excitement at the fishing

opportunities he would have in his spare time."

"Well, it turns out he was quite a good doctor with a charming bedside manner," continued McTaggart, "and soon became very popular in the district. During his time there he was called out to farmhouses on many occasions to deliver local babies."

"Now after a few months the regular doctor arrived back, and was staggered at the large number of 10, 12, and 14 lb babies that had been born during his absence. He wondered about this until he attended an emergency case soon after his return. His young locum friend accompanied him and was doing all the weighing using his fishing scales."

From the EDITOR'S DESK



"The great charm of fly-fishing is that we are always learning." (Theodore Gordon)

"The best fisherman I know try not to make the same mistakes over and over again; instead they strive to make new and interesting mistakes and to remember what they learned from them." (John Gierach "Fly Fishing the High Country")

"There is only one theory about angling in which I have perfect confidence, and this is that the two words least appropriate to any statement about it are the words "always" and "never." (Lord Edward Grey)

"The best fisherman in the world can't catch them if they aren't there." (Anthony Accerrano)

Rod is a neighbour of mine. He is also a skilled and experienced fly fisher, and last week he headed off for his annual trip to Eucumbene. Before he left we had a coffee together, and we talked about his plans and what he anticipated and the fishing strategies he had in mind. At one point I asked if he would take a sinking line with him. He looked aghast and assured me he wasn't into blind searching. He would only cast when he found a fish that was rising or visibly working.

His remark reminded me of a Jim Blakeslee comment some years ago. We were fishing Lake Ada together in Tasmania and Jim commented that he had an intense dislike of blind searching, because so often you were casting and fishing with great care and intensity in water that was in fact totally devoid of fish.

I can appreciate Jim's point, and agree with both he and Rod that fishing to fish you can actually see rising or working is heaps better than the alternative. But I also need to confess that I don't actually mind a bit of blind searching. When I first started serious fly fishing I was living in Warrnambool, and spent lots of Saturday

afternoons fishing the lower Merri - that stretch from the Bromfield Street weir in the middle of town all the way down to the estuary. This section of the Merri is deep, fairly slow flowing, and not all that clear. But it also held plenty of big browns. My strategy was to fish slowly upstream, plumbing the depths with a sinking line and a large wet fly. It was rare to see a fish splash on the surface, but I figured that if I covered enough water there was every chance that at some point somewhere along the river my fly would go past the nose of a fish that was willing to grab it. And it worked. Often enough the return was one, and sometimes even two fish, and as they were likely to be three or four pounders that was enough to make the afternoon worthwhile. Blind searching of course, but just being on the river was thoroughly enjoyable anyway, and the relaxing rhythm of continuous casting just added to it.

Neil Grose, in his book *Essential Fly-Fishing Techniques for Australian Lakes*, says this: "Fishing the wet fly from the shore in the early season involves a lot of blind searching... It sounds a little boring, but intelligent blind searching can help to catch more fish ... In many (Tassie) lakes the density of trout means that if you've

been fishing for an hour it is a safe bet that at least four of five trout have seen your flies." Four or five trout each hour seeing your flies is not such bad odds. If you've got the right fly and the right presentation then you'll connect, or at least that's the theory.

Years ago I was fishing Brumby's Creek and a keen, well-kitted out young fly fisher stepped up and waded out to a good-looking run. As he took off he yelled to me: "I'm certain to pick up a pile of fish tonight." "How so," I asked. "Simple," he replied. "I've had six trips out here in the last month and caught nothing every time. It's impossible for my rotten luck to continue any longer."

I liked his logic, and it's sort of mathematically correct. If the likelihood of catching nothing on any one trip is high, then if you make a succession of trips then the likelihood of catching nothing on all of those trips steadily decreases with each new trip, provided of course there are fish there to catch and your flies and presentation are okay.

It helps of course to be organised and to have good data. Chris Gray, a new member of Council, is a very organised and thoughtful angler. He called in for a

coffee a few weeks ago and was telling me about his holiday house at Seaspray on the Gippsland Coast just south of Sale. Chris does a bit of sea fishing and initially wasn't very successful. But he was persistent, and kept meticulous records of all the factors (weather, tides, barometer, cloud cover, water temperature, etc) that might have a bearing on his success in catching the various local saltwater species. He also carried out lots of experiments to test some developing theories, and finally wound up with an Excel spreadsheet that listed all of the factors that proved relevant, along with the number of fish caught on each outing.

Chris's spreadsheet now enables him to predict fairly accurately what his chances of success are whenever he puts his boat in. He is now working on a similar spreadsheet for his trout fishing, and has found that thus far his results are fairly much in line with the trout catching predictions of those published solunar tables.

All quite fascinating. I shall keep having coffee with Chris.

In the meantime, tight lines,

Lyndon Webb

Web Fish

Cast regularly at vffa.org.au

About the VFFA web site:

The VFFA web site has a comprehensive coverage of VFFA events, meetings, trips, ... updated monthly making it easy to track dates and times.

Features of VFFA web site:

- Monthly Newsletter delivered to members in full colour.
- Live access to more than five years of past Newsletters
- Newsletter in PDF format for easy reading on computers / iPads / tablets & smart phones
- Newsletter in PDF format can be read & saved on iPad / tablets like eBooks
- Calendar of all activities can sync with all your digital device calendars
- Gallery of events - Photos & Event reports
- Where to fish directories: Victoria, Tasmania, NSW, New Zealand

VFFA Notice of Major Event

Goulburn River - January 19 - 21, 2018

The Event: A weekend of guided fishing on the Goulburn River with the expert team from the Goulburn Valley Fly Fishing Centre in Thornton. This will comprise a combination of guided drift boat fishing (taking fishermen into otherwise inaccessible parts of the river) and guided bank side fishing.

Event date: Check in Friday, January 19, check out am Sunday, January 21.

Travel: You are responsible for making your own arrangements to and from Thornton.

Cost/s: Approximate cost will be \$400 per person, including accommodation (based on the number sharing a cabin), one three-hour guided session in a drift boat, river bank guided fishing, and a BBQ dinner on the Saturday night organised by GVFFC.

Event location & address: Accommodation is confirmed at Breakaway Twin Rivers Caravan Park, 91 Breakaway Road, Acheron VIC 3714.

Accommodation: Shared Cabin.

Sleeping requirements: Bedding and towels included.

Catering / food and drink requirements: Self catering Friday night - however the group may possibly meet for a meal at the Corner Hotel in Alexandra. Lunch on Saturday will be self-catering and dinner on Saturday night will be a BBQ dinner organised by GVFFC.

Description of fishing areas: Activities will be focused on Saturday, allowing members to make their own plans on Friday if they wish to come up early and also on Sunday if they wish to stay on. Fishing on Saturday will include one three-hour guided session in a drift boat as well as guided bank side fishing, learning tactics honed by the GVFFC team.

Mobile phone coverage: Yes.

How physically challenging: The guided drift boat fishing includes a guide rowing the boat at all times and two comfortable swivel chairs at either end of the boat for the fishermen. Access to the bankside fishing on the Goulburn River is generally easy.

Fishing license required: Yes.

Strongly recommended personal equipment: waders/wading boots, gaiters if wet wading, brimmed hat, glasses/sunglasses, sunscreen, wet weather gear, warm clothes, wading staff, torch at dusk onwards, mobile phone, water, lunch. GVFFC guides are all highly experienced and accredited for drift boat guiding. They will provide life jackets as well as a safety briefing.

Event Registration Form (ERF): To be completed and returned to Event Co-ordinator by January 4, 2018. Obtain ERF from www.vffa.org.au or pick up one at a General Meeting.

Event Co-coordinator: Alex Evans - Mobile 0475 409 084, Email: aksce@outlook.com

Date of this Notice of Event: November 24, 2017

A Special Event for the Ladies

... A weekend of Casting Tuition for all levels of ability, including beginners.

This event is the brain child of Peter Hayes and Judith Oliver, and its purpose is to introduce women to fly fishing with some structured tutoring but without any pressure.

There will be class room tutorials and casting practise around the casting pond. This will be the fourth year of the event, and it is growing in popularity each year. Peter stocks the casting pond with rainbow trout so the ladies can have lots of fun honing their skills.

Since the original event one participant has sat her Certified Casting Instructor assessment, and another lady about to sit her CCI assessment.

The weekend is opened on the Friday night by Peter Hayes, and participants will be addressed by a female guest speaker on the Saturday evening.

The event is sponsored by The Essential Flyfisher store in Launceston (Mike and Jules Stevens, and Jock). The main prize is a rod and reel presented by Jules Stevens, and there are several other prizes to be given away too.

The weekend is catered for by the famous Jen Guerre.

Date: Friday April 20 – Sunday afternoon April 22, 2018.

Hosted in Tasmania at Hayes on Brumby's

Launceston Airport pick up / drop off available

Web page to visit:

Peter Hayes www.flyfishtasmania.com Look under Courses and you will see GGFF. Also visit GGFF Facebook page.

Address of the Location:

Hayes on Brumby's, 1696 Cressy Road, Cressy, Tasmania 7302

Contact: For any information please contact VFFA member Judith Oliver IFF CCI

Email: juditholi@bigpond.com



Last year's group of keen lady fly fishers

The 2017 Trout Conference

... by Dermot O'Brien

The 2017 *Talk Wild Trout Conference* took place at Mansfield on Saturday November 11. This was the third trout conference and in some ways wrapped up three years of research and angler involvement.

The Minister for Agriculture Jaala Pulford said in conference documents: "Victoria's wild trout fisheries are the fishing jewel in the crown of our State." She went on to say that Fisheries have delivered the Wild Trout Fishery Management Program and extended the program for a further two years.

While part of the conference was referencing the first two years of research (and conferences) the latest conference focused heavily on the importance of trout habitat and angler involvement, particularly in the area of angler riparian partnerships.

This is the area where the VFFA played an important role. With other groups, I had been invited to speak about our August tree planting project on the Little River at Taggerty. This was a successful project (and should be repeated) and the story in the September edition of *Fly Lines* under the heading 'Putting Something Back' was reprinted in full in the official conference book. Indeed, that story will also be reprinted in a Victorian Landcare Magazine.

The VFFA was well represented with about a dozen members in attendance, and like last year the Mansfield Fly Fishing Club and Fisheries put on a BBQ which was a good networking opportunity.

One important session was the Health Report Cards for ten Victorian trout streams. Unfortunately only three streams were rated as excellent: Howqua, Merri and Hopkins, and Taralgon Creek. The Upper Goulburn, the Mitta Mitta and Jamieson Rivers were rated as good.

Once again there was no love expressed for stocking streams. The latest research indicated that of the 15,000 brown trout stocked only 11% were recaptured.

Hui King Ho of the Victorian Fisheries Authority wrote that these results are not unusual and reinforces the continuing trend throughout the study that stocked fish do not provide good returns on the investment. There are many examples of this from Victoria and from overseas, these indicating that stocking trout on top of self-sustaining trout populations was not an effective long-term strategy to enhance wild stocks.

The good news: trout populations appear to be very resistant, they can fluctuate wildly depending on the time of year, and trout populations can recover very quickly when conditions are suitable.

The really good news is that money is being spent on research and on trout habitat, and there is a high level of interest in trout.

The 2017 Trout Conference

... another perspective by Marianne Wallace

The Three-Year Wild Trout Fisheries Program was initiated in February 2014 by Fisheries Victoria, following a very poor fishing year in the state's North-East rivers. The issues examined included the effect of water temperatures on trout distribution, whether wild trout populations were declining, annual breeding performance, and the effect of excessive angler pressure. Also examined were angling club historical records, the degree of riparian shading and the scope to rehabilitate it, and the effectiveness of river stocking.

Initially 15 rivers and streams were looked at and "health" cards were written for each. East-West flowing rivers (the Delatite, Howqua, and Jamieson) were noted as having higher summer water temperatures (up to 29°C), especially if riparian shading was lacking. Above 22°C larger trout were found to move upstream. Climate change modelling suggests our fisheries may decline by up to 50 % over the next 20 years. This is a global concern.

Trout fishing pressure seems to have had little impact. Stocking studies using fin-clipped yearlings and electrocautery confirmed the ineffectiveness of river stocking in rivers with existing breeding trout populations. This does not apply to waters such as the Merri and Hopkins Rivers, where there is no natural recruitment.

The ARPP (Angler Riparian Partnership Program) operates across nine Catchment Authorities, and well over a hundred anglers have been involved in tree planting projects. This is a very rewarding exercise, and I would encourage all fly fishers to get involved with it. Other volunteers have been involved in erecting

fencing and the placement of logs and boulders in waterways. The new emphasis is on "Fish, Water and Land management", and having all interested parties working together.

A fascinating talk was given by the keynote speaker, John Hayes, a scientist from New Zealand. John has been studying the environmental requirements and behaviours of trout and has created sophisticated models to predict how they may behave with new environmental variables. He has predicted how trout growth and abundance respond to temperature, food supply, flow and turbidity. It was interesting to hear that New Zealand also has a fishery in decline due to abuses such as the removal of riparian vegetation, and nitrogen pollution and sedimentation from the effects of dairy farming.

Lethal temperature ranges do not just influence mortality (which is an exponential effect) but there is also an optimal temperature range for growth rate for trout (14 - 17 degrees Celsius for browns and 16 - 20 degrees Celsius for rainbows). In addition, trout with a fish diet grow massively bigger than those on an invertebrate diet, so perhaps restoring native fish numbers could produce trophy trout in Victoria.

The survey of Wild Trout populations showed that browns made up 66% of the trout counted and tended to be consistently larger (up to 55 cm) than the rainbows (up to 37 cm). To summarise, recruitment varies from year to year. The fisheries are stable but at lower altitudes

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are more variable. There is a greater abundance of fish at higher altitudes.

Regarding the “Health Cards”, the three waters scoring “Excellent” were the Howqua River, Merri and Hopkins catchment, and Traralgon Creek. The “trophy water” for most trout per 100 metres of river was the Upper Goulburn, followed by the Howqua. The biggest brown trout were caught from the Merri and Hopkins, followed by the Goulburn tailrace.

The VFA (Victorian Fisheries Authority) is piloting a mobile phone application called ‘My Catch’ for collecting, managing and presenting data from angling clubs. This may indicate the level of success of fishery management interventions and angler satisfaction. It is also hoped that it may encourage more younger anglers to take up the sport, which is heavily skewed towards retirees.

Brett Ingram talked about trout marking methods, such as fin clipping (very time consuming) and genetic profiling or

barium marking (which is good for large numbers).

The Australian Trout Foundation in conjunction with the VFA and recreational clubs has been involved with the placing of Scotty Jordan incubators in the King, Jamieson and Traralgon rivers / creeks. Brown trout eggs from Snobs Creek were loaded into the incubators after DNA samples were taken from the parent trout. Hatch rates were 75% from the Jamieson, 96% from the King, and 98% from Traralgon Creek. It’s a labour intensive project but could be far more effective than stocking. Watch this space....

Finally, Jon Clewlow, part owner of Millbrook Lakes, gave an entertaining talk about the dollar value that his fly fishing passion has cost him since he caught his first ever fish on a fly!

The Take Home messages: take an interest in your fisheries, get involved in fishery projects, plant trees, and encourage kids to fish so that future generations get as much enjoyment as we do!



Fly Fishing Art – Lyn Smith

This month we have another of Lyn’s sketches, this time a New Zealand fly - the Dad’s Favourite.

Lyn’s sketches of flies and some of her other work can be seen on her website: www.artofthetroutfly.com



Warrnambool This Year - November 17 to 19

... from Bruce Houghton

Another happy contingent of anglers went on the weekend trip to Warrnambool this year, staying in cabins on the Warrnambool beachfront. Our aim was to meet up with members from the Warrnambool Fly Fishers (WFFC), who were going to guide us on their rivers on Saturday, this then being followed by a dinner at Jim and Trish Blakeslee's home/winery in the evening.

Ten VFFA anglers ventured West this year (including Marianne Wallace, one of our new Council members). Some had enjoyed this trip on previous occasions, whereas for others it was their first outing with the generous WFFC members. A few of us had previously met up with WFFC members when they kindly offered to show us how to catch fish from Lakes Purrumbete and Lake Bullen when we were competing against Bairnsdale Fly Fishers Club

members in the friendly competition for the new Bruce Whitehead Western Lakes Perpetual Trophy.



Corey Houghton relaxing on the Mt Emu

On the Saturday morning we met at Jim Blakeslee's place to be allocated to our WFFC guides. I had not been guided before on the Moyne River near Port Fairy, so Adrian Jacobs, WFFC president,



Enjoying the magnificent Saturday night spread at Jim and Trish's

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agreed to take Corey and I there. Unfortunately, the river was running high and back into the tall grass and reeds, which made fishing and walking awkward on a warm day. No fish were seen, so Adrian decided it may be better to try elsewhere. After lunch we collected his boat from his home and he took us to Lake Gilleard. Initially we had clear skies overhead, but were able to see the phenomenon of trapped cold air causing thick misty fog along the coastline while there was bright sunshine still just a few kilometres inland.



The Mt Emu - placid water but no rises

Fly fishing with three in a boat was challenging to say the least, particularly when the wind increased. Corey has since reminded me of damage to his skin and clothes from flying hooks, probably caused by somebody's limp wrist (mine??) at the end of a hard backcast. The best we could manage was to practise our casting from a drifting boat in a strong wind. Our guide managed to catch a redfin.

With the wind increasing, Adrian suggested that Corey and I could try a stint at the Mount Emu Creek junction with the Hopkins River, while he returned his boat and then assisted Jim prepare the evening meal. We visited the Mount Emu Creek but didn't see any evidence of fish about, but had a pleasant walk with some useful casting practice. Some features of the banks and trees had changed since we were last there, probably due to previous floods.



Relaxing at the Blakeslee's

Once again Jim and Trish Blakeslee and other WFFC members provided a wonderful BBQ dinner, which of course included a large smoked trout entrée. Discussion of the fishing successes of the day were exchanged, but only one small trout had been caught and no major calamities occurred. Rick Dugina's fish was about 20 cm long, though no one bothered to measure it. Another tiddler was also caught that was really too small to count. Apparently it was only slightly bigger than the hook. During some presidential friendship speeches by Adrian and Kossy (representing VFFA), Adrian showed the framed acknowledgement of their 50th Anniversary certificate that the VFFA presented to the WFFC at their Annual Game Dinner in July.

We all thanked the WFFC members for guiding us, and sharing their knowledge and companionship; and for the magnificent dinner. We shall return!



Jim's birthday cake - another reason to celebrate



Streamcraft Day at Tranquil Rises a huge success

... by Neil Vincett

On Wednesday, November 22, David Grisold conducted a Streamcraft Day at Flowerdale. The object of the day was to give members some insights into how to enjoy fly fishing in our local streams and of course how to be successful in this fascinating form of fly fishing.

Some 10 members of the VFFA arrived at Tranquil Rises Trout Ponds at the start of the day. David took us to a section of the King Parrot Creek behind the Flowerdale Pub near Moores Bridge and spent some time telling us how to master some essential aspects of streamcraft.

We all had a cast in this lovely section of the creek, as David explained the best

places to place our fly. One aspect that was particularly interesting was the use of the leader in the stream as opposed to the flyline itself. The object of the exercise was to minimize drag and to present the fly as natural as possible.

David talked about quartering the stream with a number of casts, and then moving forward a few steps at a time. We discussed the most likely places that trout would position themselves to gather food while at the same time minimizing the amount of energy they used. We all thoroughly enjoyed David's presentation whilst appreciating his knowledge and enthusiasm for his subject.



Choco instructing the crew

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Following his talk on streamcraft David and his wife Rhonda provided a scrumptious BBQ lunch that we all enjoyed, along with a couple of bottles of Red that went down rather well too!

Talking with David at lunch he told us some of the history of Tranquil Rises and the gentleman who owned and ran it the past. From what I understand VFFA members have had many great weekends at this lovely spot. With new owner Brad there could well be a return of those trips.

After lunch we all went for fish in the Tranquil Rises trout ponds. By mid-

afternoon the temperature had risen steadily and I think the poor trout were taking refuge at the bottom where there was cooler water. I didn't see too many fish caught.

To cap off a great day, David organised for us each to receive a copy of Mike Spry's notes on Streamcraft.

All in all a great day and many thanks from all of us to David (Choco) and his good mate Rhonda.

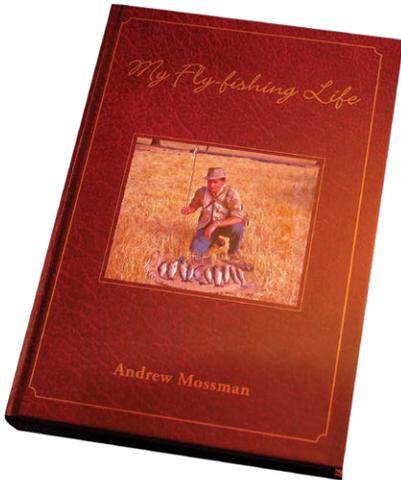


Gathering on the King Parrot - a delightful stream close to Melbourne



My Fly-fishing Life

... a review of Andrew Mossman's book, by Iain Skinner



Andrew Mossman has entitled his biography "My Fly-fishing Life", but I think he has underestimated the work, and to me it represents far more than just this. Andrew has looked into his memories, his diaries, his life and the depths of his essence to produce a book that explores the entire range of his fly fishing journey. It has been a privilege to see into Andrew's world and to experience his growth as a fisherman, to learn about his fishing friends and family, and to understand his thought processes and creativity as he challenged himself to break nature's code and improve as a fisherman. At no stage, though, does Andrew exhibit the glib smugness of so many fishing authors who have success, and he retains the healthiest of respect for the ecosystems he has interacted with (some of which no longer exist) and his ultimately fickle salmonid quarry.

The book starts with his earliest memories of fishing with his father on and around the Goulburn River and Eildon Dam. The

places he describes gave me that warm and comfortable glow of familiarity as I (as many of us will) have fished some of these places myself. The fondness with which he remembers his father also resonates and brings an obvious joy to his words.

The narrative progresses with parallel stories. The first is geographic and as the chapters build we see the young enthusiast with limited scope discover a world of fishing in his own backyard. Exploring the Monaro with Andrew, and the multitude of waters it contains, left me full of nostalgia. To hear of people and places, alive and vibrant, many of which are now lost to us, reinforced the ephemeral nature of both the Mayfly and our own lives, and how much we must treasure every day and every experience in the way Andrew has. The same was true of his journeys through the rivers and lakes of our closest neighbouring major island, Tasmania, and that more distant one, New Zealand. By the end of the book Andrew has made the transition to accomplished international angler, having fished in the UK, Europe and North America, with much of this journey self-guided but supported by a cast of astounding people and wonderful interactions.

The second story, despite it being only a small part of the narrative, is how Margot and the girls (his daughters) were all part of his journey. They travelled with him, fished with him, at times out-fished him, sometimes scared him to within an inch of his life, but were always there to experience fly fishing and all of its joys with him. I am an envious man and wish my partner and children were >>>

equally passionate about my fishing. My only disappointment is that very little of Andrew's non fly-fishing life is linked into his story. Inclusion of this would have added to my understanding of how his fly fishing and his broader life interacted.

The third story is the development of Andrew's understanding of fish, insects, flies, equipment and techniques. Books were his initial starting point and as his knowledge increased he began to question the wisdoms expounded and the 'truths' suggested. As a "self-made man" in many ways Andrew gives us the privilege of seeing into his thoughts and ideas and how these led to many of his successes, despite often going against the accepted beliefs. Learning from him in this way is one of the inspiring aspects of the book. Andrew proves himself to be observant, quick to appreciate subtle changes in fish behaviour, and equally quick to respond to these changes. His fly developments speak volumes to his knowledge of entomology and the subtle variations in life cycle stages that he has tried to imitate in his own designs (with tying instructions for these flies given at the end of the book).

Andrew also reveals some of his hard won and long considered observations on fishing techniques. Notes on playing and landing fish, wading, striking, netting, leaders and tippets, cleaning dry flies and the ubiquitous Australian snakes speak volumes on his experience and experiences. In a short chapter he distils this advice and provides insights that will make all of his readers at least consider their own opinions and beliefs in a new light. They may even win us an extra fish or two that may have been lost before.

In the later section of the book Andrew also spends time reflecting on very specific aspects around the sport he is so passionate about. He is brave to reveal

these closely held and long considered opinions, as they will inevitably cause debate among his readers and perhaps even polarise them somewhat, though perhaps this is what Andrew intended with this chapter. He has spent his whole life reflecting deeply on the technical elements of his own fishing and perhaps wants us to be engaged similarly in the more philosophical aspects.

In considering the book as a whole many adjectives come to mind: growth, development, focus, experience and learning, skill, passion, opportunities, history and tradition, friendship and fellowship. All of these apply to Andrew's Fly-fishing Life. He brings to us, as readers, the vigour and excitement he has found in pursuing his goals and the deep joy he has had in the learning and the practising of all he has developed.

If the role of art is to create emotion then this book is truly art. I experienced joy, excitement, awe, happiness, nostalgia, sadness at loss and not just a little envy. As someone who has had little control of his own time I have had to live my own fly fishing life vicariously through books like this, magazines, gear purchases, casting practice, coaches (the way I view guides), organized trips and assisted fishing. The luxury of many years of regular fishing to develop our own skills is beyond many of us and it is through books like Andrew's that we can learn and develop, much like the way in which coaches, trips and courses do the same for us. I cannot recommend this book more highly and look forward to rereading my own copy to glean more of the wisdom that I certainly will have missed with only one reading.



Bias, Big Water and Czech Nymphing

... by Mike Van De Graaf, in FlyStream digital magazine, October 30, 2017. Used with permission. Last issue we published a great article on traditional indicator nymphing by Tom Sutcliffe. This month we have another and rather different approach to the same method.

Over the last year especially, it's occurred to me that most fly fishers suffer from a thing we call in management a 'status-quo-bias'. In this case, the status-quo is best visualised as an ever so dependable and ever so generic size 14 Parachute Adams. This bias towards the status-quo means that come what may, the Parachute Adams will be fished. A nymph might be tied off its hook bend as a compromise.

Suffering from biases can lead to under-performance. Three recent outings on the Rubicon River, the Buckland River and the Ovens River illustrate this. On each of these outings, two things happened:

- a) I met a number of other fly fishers who had a Parachute Adams on and who asked me if I was fishing 'a dry-dropper too';
- b) the water levels in each of these rivers was high, the flow was very fast and the water was crystal clear and icy cold from snow melt.

In each case I was thinking, why on earth would you fish a dry fly? Unless of course your purpose is to cast a lot and go home empty-handed. All five fly fishers I met had blanked. In each case, I caught more than a dozen fish. How? By fishing a Czech nymph system (and I am a relative beginner at it!). That is what I mean when I say strong bias can lead to under-performance!

Now discussing the Czech nymph system is the BBQ-stopper among fly fishers; the equivalent of talking politics or religion. In fact, with most fly fishers, it is easier to talk politics or religion! So why is that? Fly fishing is all about matching the hatch, getting the fly to where the fish is feeding

and yes, it is about catching fish. The Czech nymph system consists mainly of fishing heavy nymphs on a long leader, with a fly line that is designed not to have any weight forward. You basically cast the nymphs with a long rod, and hold a tight line to feel the fish eat the nymph.

Two years ago I was introduced to Czech nymphing during a great two-day workshop with former World Champion Martin Droz, organised by Christopher Bassano. Since then, I've moved out of my comfort zone – and my urge to stick on my go-to 'dry-dropper' whenever I go fishing. I began the journey to employ Czech nymphing whenever the situation seemed to call for it.



Early season high fast water

So, let me try to explain what I learned when busting my dry-dropper-bias. Finding my rhythm in Czech nymph casting is as meditative, as technical, and as much fun as casting a floating line. Remember how hard it was when you started casting a conventional outfit, yet how joyful it is now? Same goes for Czech nymphing. My tip is to begin Czech nymphing by casting quite >>>

heavy flies (double tungsten on the point). It makes casting easier, and you keep a tighter system with a more direct connection with the flies.

Czech nymphing is also surprisingly visual. I see many fish emerge from the deeper water to eat the top dropper fly. This is every bit as visual as seeing a fish eat the dry. It's also a bit more technical, as you have to set the hook on the eating behavior of the fish. The trout moves over, stops to eat and that is when you set the hook. Don't wait for it to move back; it just spat your fly.

But here's another thing I learned. Fish that eat nymphs are more forgiving of mistakes. So often now, I first feel a bump, meaning a fish was on only briefly. I then recast and drift the same flies in the same spot, maybe with a slight induced movement, and the trout will take again. They seem a lot less spooked from a nymph that wasn't food. We all know how they can respond when they see a dry fly that is not supposed to be there (I am thinking the Mataura here...).

Finally, Czech nymphing taught me the art of going slow. As Christopher said when we saw Martin Droz gently combing through one single run and pulling out fish after fish: "All us blokes would be round the next bend and into the next valley by now!" Indeed, on my last session I had caught a dozen fish in two runs. I could still see my car and I had moved perhaps 30 metres. I did a test and returned the next day to the fish dry-dropper on the same stretch. I had to wade up 100 metres through fast flowing water to catch one single trout.

So what is the upside of all this? Well, it is about learning to adapt to new situations, learning a new skill, buying some new gear (do we need another excuse?), slowing down and catching more fish. As a bonus, by the simple fact of statistics, if you catch that many more fish, you will

also increase your chances of catching that bigger fish.



A magnificent Ovens River brown that fell to some Czech nymphing

Above is one I pulled up from a deep, swift run, right in front of a popular campsite on the Ovens River this weekend. I bet that area had been heavily fished over the recent school holidays, maybe by the dry-dropper brigade! A trout like this is pretty much an outlier in these rivers. From this run I had taken four fish already, so I was fishing 'in the zone' and therefore, by the simple law of numbers, the next one in line was this beautiful 53 cm brown trout!

I'll finish with some wise words from the economist John Maynard Keynes, who said: "When the facts change, I change my mind. What do you do, Sir?" When the fish start rising, or when the water levels finally begin dropping, I am prepared to change my mind to the dry (with dropper, if I must!). But until that time, the facts strongly point to fishing nymphs deep to get results.



Tassie in the 1960s

Our old newsletters are a wonderful source of fascinating information. The January 1963 newsletter, for example, carries a report on a previous general meeting when VFFA president, Mr Fred Stewart, gave members his thoughts on fishing in Tasmania, which he and the VFFA secretary of the time, Tom Riley, had visited shortly beforehand. Here is Fred's report on their trip.

Tasmania has a great reputation as the mecca of fly fishermen, though this is now being challenged by the new lakes in the Snowy Mountains and a few new lakes in northern Victoria. The great advantage enjoyed by Tasmanian fly fishers is the immense variety offered within a short drive from its main centres of population.

Tom Riley and I arrived a little early for the dry fly on the lakes. Penstock had nothing to offer inshore, but wet fly from a boat was quite lively at times. Tom and I started our fishing on this water, but took only one fish each, one of these on a Fiery Brown fly and the other on a Cocky dry. Next day the very beautiful Pine Tier dam was visited. This was in dry fly condition, and delighted us both. The browns, though fairly small, took the fly and made off with great gusto. One of Tom's, which he did not land, took the fly when his attention was diverted, and soon wound the leader around some snags. It kept Tom's fly.

We visited Little Pine in the morning and Tom and I fished the river channel. I soon had a strike close into the bank on a Black Matuka. This was a grand fighting fish, and turned the scales at just on 6 pounds. Later in the day tailers in the shallows gave us much excitement, and I was able to take one of 3½ pound whilst Tom lost a really good one. Next night Tom was a sight to see as he chased the tailers, his eyes popping out as he shuffled along on his knees, pumping the nymph out in front of the moving

fish. At last he raised his rod in salute as he landed a beautiful fish of just on 4 pounds.

The Morass, between the two Arthur Lakes, gave us some interesting hours. Moving fish in the weeds set us many problems. Tom hooked a big one on a dry, but alas his 3X tippet parted like a violin string. But a good fish a bit later came to Tom's net. In the evening I took two on a brown nymph.

Through the courtesy of Mr and Mrs David Scholes I was able to visit the rivers whilst enjoying my stay in their home, which is situated so as to gain a beautiful vista of Launceston, the Tamar River, and the mountains beyond. Again, the fishing was variable as the north-eastern streams were high and not fishable.

Altogether, Tasmania has much to offer us Victorians. There is still unlimited fishing, with 10 pound browns still under the wall of the Great Lake, inviting us to take them. The fascination of the tailers and the rings of the risers draw you back. Tom and I would say, "Great show! We hope to see you again soon."

FLY OF THE MONTH

Jim Blakeslee's Green Bug



(Photo by Vlad Bunyevich, from the VFFA book *Time Flies*, and used with permission.)

In his presentation to the November meeting Jim Blakeslee referred to the Green Bug as one of his favourite flies for catching the big browns in the rivers around Warrnambool. There is no doubt that the main trout rivers around Warrnambool carry heavy populations of shrimp. This is particularly true of the upper Merri.

I have some clear memories of how effective this fly can be when Jim uses it. A few years ago I was in Warrnambool for a few days holiday and Jim took me out to one of his favourite stretches on the upper Merri. He was fishing his Green Bug about 60 cm behind a Woolly Bugger, the theory being that the trout would come out to check the big black hairy thing swimming past, then grab the shrimp pattern tagging along behind. Jim spent most of his time trying to put me onto fish, but at the same time managed three or four magnificent browns himself, all on the Green Bug.

This fly is Jim's adaptation of a fly called the Cream Bug, originally a caddis pupa pattern devised by Ted Fay of northern California. But by changing the colour, Jim has matched the fly in size, colour and action to the local shrimps. But this fly should not just be confined to Warrnambool rivers - it will work anywhere where there is a population of shrimp.

The Materials:

Hook: Size 10 or 12 nymph hook

Thread: Green to match the body colour.

Weight: Optional – a few wraps of lead wire around the front two thirds of the hook.

Body: A gradually tapered body (not too fat) of three parts light sandy grey hare's *body* fur (not hare's *ear* fur) mixed with one part golden olive or insect green seal's fur. Alternatively, simply dye some hare body fur green.

Rib: The tying thread

Legs/Antennae: Two bunches, each of about 10 'wiggly' fibres (for better action) from towards the base of a barred wood duck feather, dyed insect green to match the body. The fibres should be long enough to reach the bend of the hook. Tie in one bunch on each side, just ahead of the dubbed body, and slanting rearwards. Pull the butts back and lock them down with a turn or two of thread, then trim them off.

Head: One peacock herl wound backwards over the tied-down butts, then forward to the eye to create a small head. Reinforce it with a few turns of thread, then add a half hitch behind the eye. Trim off the butt of the herl, then whip finish.

Note: The Veniard dye colour Golden Olive can be matched by mixing five parts of Rit Sunshine Orange to 4 parts of Rit Kelly Green. The Veniard dye colour Insect Green can be matched by mixing eight parts Rit Lemon Yellow yellow to one part Rit Kelly Green.

Tying Notes:

1. Wind some thread along the shank and just around the bend, then tie in a small amount of the body dubbing material.
2. Wind the thread forward, building up a very thin body of the dubbing material until you reach a point about three quarters of the way along the hook shank. Then add some more dubbing material and wind the thread back toward the starting point, building up the thickness of the body to the desired degree. When you get to the point where the body was started just around the bend, wind the bare tying thread through the dubbed body in loose turns to add some ribbing.
3. Select a bunch of about 10 fibres from the barred wood duck feather and tie them in on the far side just behind the eye. Take another bunch of 10 fibres and tie these in on the near side. Pull the butts back and lock them down with a couple of turns of thread, then trim away the waste.
4. Take one peacock herl and tied in behind the eye. Wind it back to the start of the body dubbing and then forward again to build up a small head. Trim off the waste, then whip finish to complete the fly.

The following made donations for the raffle at the 2017 Annual Dinner:

- Aussie Angler Tackle Outfitters • Armadale Angling • Australian Fishing Network
- Essential Fly Fisher Launceston • FlyLife Publishing • FlyFinz Fishing Tackle and Books • Gavin Hurley's Fly Fishing & Pro-Angler • J.M. Gillies Pty Ltd
- Mayfly Tackle Pty Ltd • Millbrook Lakes • Peter Hayes • Ray Brown Onkaparinga Flies • Stevens Publishing Pty Ltd • The Flyfisher Tackle Store Melbourne
- Hook Up Bait & Tackle •

VFFA Meetings at the Kelvin Club & other activities

December 2017

- 4 Monday Council Meeting for both November and December – 6:30 pm
(Venue – the Kelvin Club)
- 14 Thursday Christmas Dinner – 6:30 for 7:00 pm
Speaker: Travis Dowling – Chief Executive Officer of the Victorian
Fisheries Authority.
(Venue – the Kelvin Club)

January 2018

- 19 – 21 Guided drift boat fishing trip on the Goulburn River
Convenor: Alex Evans

February 2018

- 10 - 16 Tasmanian Trip to Hayes on Brumbys
Event Co-ordinator – Hughie Maltby
- 22 Thursday General Meeting – a lunchtime meeting – 12 noon at the Kelvin Club.
Guest Speaker: David Anderson – professional photographer and
contributor to *Flylife* magazine
- 27 Tuesday Council Meeting – 7:30 pm

March 2018

- 15 Thursday General Meeting – 8:00 PM at the Kelvin Club
Guest Speaker: TBC
- 16 – 18 2018 Big River trip
- 27 Tuesday Council Meeting – 7:30 pm
- 30 – April 1 Easter 2018

April 2018

- 14 – 15 Donger Weekend at Bairnsdale
- 19 Thursday General Meeting – 8:00 PM at the Kelvin Club
Guest Speaker: TBC
- 24 Tuesday Council Meeting – 6:30 pm